

BELLEVUE ARTS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES

February 1, 2011
4:00 p.m.

Bellevue City Hall
Room 1E -109

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT: Chairperson Holder, Commissioners Finley, Kiselev, Ptacek, Shepherd, Smith, Tremblay

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: Mary Pat Byrne, Patti Wilma, Department of Planning and Community Development

OTHERS PRESENT: Eva Stone,

RECORDING SECRETARY: Gerry Lindsay

I. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 4:06 p.m. by Chairperson Holder who presided. All Commissioners were present with the exception of Commissioner Kiselev, who arrived at 4:07 p.m., and Commissioner Shepherd, who arrived at 4:34 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

A. Approval of Agenda

Motion to approve the agenda was made by Commissioner Tremblay. Second was by Commissioner Ptacek and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Approval of Minutes

Motion to approve the January 18, 2011, meeting minutes as submitted was made by Commissioner Ptacek. Second was by Commissioner Tremblay and the motion carried unanimously.

3. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS – None

4. ACTION ITEMS AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

A. Eva Stone's "Chop Shop" Dance Project Report

Chair Holder reminded the Commissioners that the Chop Shop dance project was funded with special projects dollars in 2010. The program has continued to grow, which is very good news.

Eva Stone said Chop Shop is a contemporary dance festival, the only one of its kind in the area. She said she has been a member of the greater Seattle dance community since 1995 but has done most of her work in teaching on the Eastside. The festival is currently in its fourth year and continues to expand; it now offers lectures, master classes, free community outreach classes, and performances by world-renowned dancers and choreographers that reside in the area.

The 2010 event garnered even more responses from artists. Twelve dance companies participated, and the outreach and master classes expanded. The shows were sold out.

Ms. Shelley said the community outreach classes were expanded in 2010. Some 45 participants attended the lectures at two different community centers, and 41 registered for the dance classes. Ninety-five participants received tickets to attend the actual performance; the tickets were extended to the Youth Link program and the response was very good.

Ms. Stone said there will be ten dance companies participating in the 2011 festival. Master classes will be held during the day. The community outreach program was just completed and the response was very good. The reading dance lecture was offered at the Bellevue Youth Theatre; about 50 kids interested in theater were involved in comparing the process and artistic nature of theater to the process and artistic nature of dance.

Ms. Shelley shared with the Commissioners a promotional video for the Chop Shop project.

Chair Holder asked how the various performance groups are selected. Ms. Stone said some of the performing artists are invited to participate; others are chosen through a call to artists. The focus is on accessibility and bringing new audiences to contemporary dance.

Answering a question asked by Commissioner Ptacek, Ms. Stone said typically festival production values are kept simple to help with speedy transitions from group to group. The upcoming festival's production values will be more elaborate.

Commissioner Kiselev asked Ms. Stone what she has done to make Bellevue attractive to performance groups. Ms. Stone said there is nothing in the region like the Chop Shop project and its method of presenting dance. The area is home to a handful of classical ballet companies, the symphony and theater companies, but the Eastside has no other contemporary dance company.

B. Urban Boulevards CIP Project

Senior Planner Patti Wilma said the new Enhanced Rights-of-Way and Urban Boulevards program is an initiative combining parks, planning and environmental stewardship. She said the program has \$4.3 million earmarked in the six-year CIP. It is focused on enhancing streets, assisting them in telling the story of Bellevue as a city in a park and generally branding of Bellevue as a green city.

Ms. Wilma said 35 city intersections have been identified as significant enough to celebrate in some way. In addition, there are more than 55 miles of arterials identified for enhancement, not including the Bel-Red area. Opportunities include using natural drainage practices, landscaping, better seating, better sidewalks, and better lighting, as well as improved signage, wayfinding and public art.

The first project under review is the Botanical Garden greenway, which is the route that leads to and from the Botanical Garden. A preliminary and conceptual study of the route has been done to identify where there are opportunities for rain gardens as well as safe and enhanced crosswalks.

A collection of guiding principles has been developed. They focus on reflecting the character of Bellevue as a city in a park; using best practices to the greatest extent possible; using common design elements in all projects that will tell a subtler story of being in Bellevue (each street or project also would have its own identity); and ensuring safety and manageability in a manner that will not be a drain on city funds over time.

Bel-Red Road is a good example. It is already a regionally recognized greenway and every attempt will be made to make sure it stays that way. Bellevue Way from SR-520 to the north edge of the

downtown has been identified as the next roadway for which to produce a conceptual design. SR-520 's rebuilding will tie in with the Bellevue Way, and it should be done to evoke a Bellevue image.

Answering a question from Commissioner Tremblay, Ms. Wilma said the intent is to spread the projects around the city. Each project must have a noticeable impact and must improve tree canopy and drainage.

Commissioner Ptacek asked if the various projects will include bike lanes. Ms. Wilma said bike lanes will be included in some but not all projects. Program funds will not be used to widen roadways for bike lanes, but will be used to enhance street projects where bike lanes are an element.

Commissioner Finley asked if a similar approach has been taken in other cities around the country. Ms. Wilma said the overall plan is an outcome of the Urban Design Element of the Comprehensive Plan. The plan gives a nod, however, to Olmstead brothers' designs that have proven track records for turning public assets into much more.

Commissioner Ptacek asked if any signature elements will be incorporated. Ms. Wilma said a short menu of elements will be developed that will help to tie the disparate streets together.

Commissioner Shepherd suggested the *Cultural Compass* as one of the plans from which the project should draw information.

Ms. Wilma said 119th Avenue SE at the Newport Hills Shopping Center is one of the streets on the list. The street is on the map as an urban boulevard and presents an excellent opportunity to upgrade the landscaping and crosswalks. Additionally, it is the perfect location in which to incorporate some of Bruce Meyer's designs. Parks has other work that is being done in the area, and transportation has plans to improve some of the sidewalks in the area. The program will help to draw all of those pieces together into a single project.

C. 2011 Funding Guidelines

Ms. Byrne explained that the guidelines used in past years have not seen a lot of change outside of direct feedback from the City Council. For 2011-12 the Council, in choosing to fund the programs, cited concern over the health of the arts in Bellevue in this difficult economy. The allocations committee wrestled with how to approach the viability issue when historically the guidelines have focused on excellence. The committee also decided to simplify form.

Ms. Byrne said the big questions in reviewing Eastside Arts Partnership applications are around viability and what the organizations will be doing in the upcoming years to strengthen themselves. The applications already include detailed budget information so it is possible to compare the current year against the previous years.

Commissioner Finley cautioned against using too many yes/no questions in the application. More background information is needed to verify the answers.

Commissioner Shepherd said it is always a red flag to see an organization is getting too much of its revenue from a single source.

Commissioner Kiselev agreed that the applicants should be asked to provide financial and background information, but the process should not be made too complicated. It would be better to have a basic application and then seek additional information in the interview process. The groups should be held accountable but without going overboard.

There was agreement to include in the application a suggestion to limit answers to 250 words.

Commissioner Kiselev left the meeting.

Commissioner Smith said the committee talked about continuing the dialog regarding what the city would like to do in non-monetary ways such as providing space, engaging in social media, and encouraging microphilanthropy. He suggested including language in the application to get the message out but also to solicit some feedback regarding other ways the city could offer support.

Commissioner Ptacek asked if something would be included in the written application or as part of the interview process. Commissioner Smith said he would like to see a statement included giving the applicants notice to be prepared to talk about the topic during their interview. Ms. Byrne cautioned against broaching the subject during the interviews given how little time is available for each interview. Commissioner Smith said in that case it would be better to include it in the application.

Commissioner Tremblay proposed using the application as a tool to create connectivity between organizations and to trigger thinking about viability through collaborations. Ms. Byrne noted that question 4 in the effective management portion of the excellence and service section of the application is on that topic. If they have developed some good ideas, it is the place to share them.

Commissioner Ptacek said he would take a different tack. He said the application process is in fact a communication between the city and the arts groups who are seeking funding. As such, it should not be used to draw additional needs information out of them. If a separate document seeking the broader and more in-depth answers were used, it could serve as a survey instrument.

Continuing, Ms. Byrne said the special projects application will be almost exactly as before, though it has been visually simplified. Under Commission initiatives, Bel Red again will be listed. For 2011, projects supporting the limited update of the Cultural Compass will also receive priority attention.

The Commissioners indicated their approval of the updated guidelines.

Ms. Byrne said she would get the package ready for presentation to the City Council on February 22.

Motion to approve the draft guidelines for special projects and the Eastside Arts Partnership as amended was made by Commissioner Smith. Second was by Commissioner Shepherd and the motion carried unanimously.

D. Non-monetary Assistance to Arts Groups

It was agreed to hold conversation on ideas for non-monetary assistance to arts groups until after ideas are brought in through the application process.

5. COMMISSION QUICK BUSINESS

A. Library Art Project

Commissioner Ptacek said several years ago one of his staff visited London and saw works of public art on display and found that they could click on their phones and learn all about them. The staffer came back and asked why the library was not doing something similar. Commissioner Ptacek said that while it took some time, the library is working to complete the development of large book jacket posters that herald reading around the region. The program will officially launch on March 1.

B. Bellevue Youth Theatre

Commissioner Tremblay said the final tally for the Bellevue Youth Theatre Wizard of Oz fundraising event had not yet been announced. She said Mayor Davidson consented to play the Mayor of Munchkin land.

Commissioners Tremblay and Shepherd left the meeting.

6. REPORTS

A. Commissioner Reports – None

B. Staff Reports

Ms. Byrne reminded the Commissioners that Arts Day in Olympia was scheduled for February 2. She said the state Arts Commission is marked to be disbanded in the Governor's budget. Ms Byrne said the hope is that the state will not walk away from the nearly \$1 million that the state Arts Commission gets annually from the National Endowment for the Arts; the state cannot receive the money without a Commission and unless the state matches the funds.

Ms. Byrne said the lodging tax is on the table for discussion in Olympia given its current sunset date in 2012. The tax wholly funds 4Culture. If the legislature does not act, hundreds of arts groups and agencies, including many on the Eastside, will lose funding.

Commissioner Finley reported that King County has put economic development, which includes funding for arts groups, as number three on its list of top five priorities. She said she will be meeting soon with Councilmember Jane Hague to talk about the issue.

Ms. Byrne shared with the Commissioners information about the ArtsFund economic impact of the arts survey recently released. She said in terms of taxes, the four-county area generates on the order of \$78 million annually.

Ms. Byrne said she hoped to have more information about the Newport Hills/Lake Heights public art project at the March Commission meeting.

Chair Holder made the suggestion to conduct a Commission meeting in either March or April away from City Hall.

7. CORRESPONDENCE, INFORMATION AND UPCOMING EVENTS

A. Written Correspondence – None

B. Information – As Noted

1. Upcoming Agenda Items
2. Calendar
3. CIP Public Art Program Commitments Update

8. COMMISSIONER COMMUNICATIONS

9. ADJOURNMENT

Chair Holder adjourned the meeting at 5:52 p.m.